

SHAKESPEARE IN ACTION

KS3 DRAMA WORKSHOPS



DIRECTOR'S INTRO

The first thing to know is that Shakespeare in Action workshops are drama workshops rather than a performance. Our aim is to encourage students to approach Shakespeare through the techniques that a professional actor would use today.

In practice, your school becomes an actor's rehearsal room. Throughout the sessions students are on their feet. We don't use scripts, printouts or pens and paper, but instead project the script onto a screen. This way, students can use their whole bodies and imaginations to throw themselves into the story.

These workshops are for students who are studying (or about to study) your chosen play. At the start of each session, our facilitator will gauge how familiar the class is with the text. They will then adapt the session according to the knowledge and abilities of the group by choosing from the activities listed in our overview below. The longer the session, the more content we can cover.

I hope your students come away inspired, energised, and ready to take on Shakespeare.

- Abi, Creative Director at West End in Schools

Learning Objectives

- To work together as an ensemble of actors.
- To take ownership of Shakespeare's text by embodying it through physicality and voice.
- To explore Shakespeare's characters, gaining new insights by experiencing them first-hand.
- To develop an improved understanding of Shakespeare's language.
- To be able to communicate verbally about the play's core themes in a deeper way.



Play Options:

A Midsummer Night's Dream
Macbeth
Romeo and Juliet
The Tempest

SHAKESPEARE IN ACTION

KS3 DRAMA WORKSHOPS



WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

Each workshop session is structured from a combination of the drama activities listed, chosen by the facilitator on the day of the workshop. The facilitator will select which activities, based on the knowledge of the class and the length of the session.

1. Introductory Activities

To begin, we will gauge the class's knowledge of the play and recap the story if needed. The time spent on these introductory activities depends on how well the students know the play.

Warm-Up

Each session kicks off with a warm-up, just like in any theatre rehearsal. This serves as an ice-breaker, gets everyone active and using their imaginations, and brings everyone into the space no matter where they have been earlier that day.

Students will:

- Be energised, and introduced to the active, physical nature of the workshop.
- Begin working together imaginatively as an ensemble of actors.
- Start to work with basic Shakespearean text, introduced gradually during the warm-up, and which forms the foundation of more advanced work later in the session.

Character Work

Approaching plays through drama is all about getting inside the heads of the characters. Here, students explore and embody multiple characters through their physicality, voice, and delivery of text. This isn't specific to one scene but rather pulls out a phrase for each character which represents their journey through the play.

Students will:

- Embody the characters and discuss how each of them fits into the context of the story.
- Explore these characters' emotions, motivations and throughlines within the plot.
- Develop their feelings about each character in order to deepen their own interpretations of them.

PRACTICALITIES

Age Range

Years 7, 8 and 9

Workshop Leader

One professional drama facilitator, experienced in bringing Shakespeare to life with young people, with an enhanced DBS check.

Session Timings & Structure

55 to 90 minutes per session
3 to 5 sessions per full day
Class-by-class for up to 30 students at a time.

Space Requirements

A hall, drama studio, or large space with enough room for the students to move freely.

Tech & Equipment

- A projector / IWB connected to a laptop or computer with internet connection, set-up and ready to go.
- Your sound system or a simple speaker which we will connect to an iPod or mobile phone to play the soundtrack.
- No desks, chairs, paper or pens are needed!

SHAKESPEARE IN ACTION

KS3 DRAMA WORKSHOPS



WORKSHOP OVERVIEW cont.

2. Getting into the Play

This is the core of the workshop. Every session will include one or both of these activities.

Exploring Relationships

We focus on the relationship between a key pair of characters in your chosen play. We'll look at the storyline between them, and explore one scene that represents the relationship. This is less about textual analysis than it is about showing students how to engage with text by inhabiting it through emotion and action.

Students will:

- Discuss the relationship between two characters throughout the overall story.
- Experience how a character might feel and think by embodying them through extracts of their dialogue.
- Identify the core themes and emotions that form the relationship between the characters.
- Analyse and interpret language physically and emotionally, through a technique which students can use in future to distil any piece of text into the feelings behind the words.

Conflict

All drama is conflict. Here, we explore a key scene or argument to examine a point of conflict between two or more of the characters. We use a popular acting rehearsal technique called actioning to break down a scene and explore the motivations behind each line. This evolves into a physical exploration of that scene.

Students will:

- Explore the idea that there isn't one interpretation of a text, and that the meaning of a line can change depending on the intention behind it.
- Gain a deeper understanding of the scene as well as the conflict within it.
- Take ownership of a scene by drawing from their own experience.
- Lift the text off the page and give it life and new meaning.

PLAY EXTRACTS

Rather than going in-depth into one scene we explore how to use and interpret text across the play. Therefore we use a variety of extracts taken from throughout each play, abridged where this aids the activity.

Below are the extracts used in the Relationship and Conflict activities:

A Midsummer Night's Dream
Act 2 Scene 1
Oberon and Titania

Macbeth
Act 3 Scene 4
Macbeth and Lady Macbeth

Romeo and Juliet
Act 2 Scene 2
Romeo and Juliet

The Tempest
Act 3 Scene 1
Miranda and Ferdinand

A Midsummer Night's Dream
Act 3 Scene 2
Helena and Hermia
Lysander and Demetrius

Macbeth
Act 5 Scene 8
Macbeth and Macduff

Romeo and Juliet
Act 3 Scene 1
Tybalt and Mercutio

The Tempest
Act 1 Scene 2
Prospero and Caliban

SHAKESPEARE IN ACTION

KS3 DRAMA WORKSHOPS



WORKSHOP OVERVIEW cont.

FAQS

3. Shakespearean Deep Dive

Longer sessions and workshops with older / more advanced classes go deeper into the text. When time allows we'll end the session with a reflection of the different interpretations of plot, themes and characters.

Imagery of Text

Working in groups, students physically recreate different plot points from the play, using their bodies to create the imagery. This activity develops into an exploration of a particular speech. By vocalising and physicalising the speech, students gain a deeper understanding of the link between text, physicality and imagery.

Students will:

- Examine the dynamics between multiple characters within a scene.
- Work as a chorus of actors, speaking the text line by line or as a whole group.
- Consider how characters interact with the environment around them.
- Explore, interpret, and embody the imagery within the text.

When there is not enough time for every activity (whether because of the allotted time or the particular group) the facilitator will structure a workshop using their choice out of the activities outlined above.

Does the workshop include writing?

No. Sticking with our theatrical expertise, we focus on physicalising and discussing the play in the room. You're very welcome to follow up the workshop with whatever writing activities you choose.

Can I request a particular scene / character /topic?

As we visit many schools we cannot tailor the specific scenes and topics for each class. Instead, the facilitator will respond to classes of different abilities on the day, and structure the session from the activities listed here.

How well should the class know the play?

Sessions work as either an introduction or in-depth exploration of the play. That said, the more the class already know, the deeper we can go into the material.

Why are you playing games?

Drama games are a technique used in professional theatre rehearsal rooms, both when staging Shakespeare and brand new plays (keyword: 'play!'). The exercises give students tools to demystify Shakespeare and distil a story, and explore the characters.

How many people deliver the workshop?

One professional drama facilitator will lead the workshop and encourage your students to take ownership of the play.

What time will you arrive?

30 minutes before the first session.

